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# The Twelfth Century in the West, Its Libraries, and Hugh of St. Victor's Classification of Knowledge\*

SIDNEY L. JACKSON

How much justification there is for calling the years between Charlemagne and the medical school at Salerno, Italy, the "Dark Ages," will perhaps never be settled agreeably to all. Nor is consensus yet in sight regarding the continuity and influence, or lack of same, from late Roman Empire principles and practices to those featuring life in twelfth-century Europe. But this much is probably accepted by most of those qualified to judge: when economic life "revived," first in Italy, the lusty youngster proved within a few centuries to be something new, and its growth was accompanied by a variety of pressures old and new for reading matter. A few indications of things to come emerged in the twelfth century.

## I

The rise of the medical school at Salerno was one aspect of the rebirth of economic vigor in Italy. Commercial success aided by the Crusades contributed to the emergence of bourgeois families of power alongside those of the older aristocracy. Money was available for the physician's services as it had not been before; more was expected of him. The impetus thereby given to the advance of the medical sciences was profound, affecting in time the organization of study in many fields, interest in Greek writings on all subjects, the selection of books, bibliography, and classification of both nature and books.

Similarly, the transition in the chief mode of acquiring property from maneuvers on the battle field to maneuvers in the law courts stimulated some fresh thinking. It was realized gradually that traditional rhetoric was not a satisfactory substitute for mastery of the law, and that new problems of property relations had to be solved by creative

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\* Like the article in this *Journal*, vol. 1, no. 2, April 1966, the present essay is a portion, slightly altered, of a history of libraries and librarianship in the West in process of composition. Again, the writer's enormous debts to scholarship have been recorded only for primary sources: Bernard of Clairvaux' *The Steps of Humility* in Burch's translation (Cambridge: Harvard U.P., 1942), Hugh of St. Victor's *Didascalicon* in Taylor's translation (New York: Columbia U.P., 1961), and John of Salisbury's *Metalogicon* in McGarry's translation (Berkeley: U. of California Press, 1955).

interpretation of existing law. Concepts, language, and modes of reasoning received close attention. The dynamic of change was soon felt in ecclesiastical law; beyond the law, in other subjects; and beyond the pioneer law school at Bologna, Italy, in other places.

The eleventh and twelfth century expounders of law habitually introduced a text by giving the name of the author, the subject matter, its purpose, what "part of philosophy" it pertained to, and its "final cause." (By "part of Philosophy" was intended its classification in the Ethics-Logic-Physics scheme attributed to Plato. "Final cause" meant, in Aristotelian language, its role in the divine plan—its "true purpose," something a mere blindly fumbling human author could not hope to think of. The "canon" (church) law masters were notable for comparisons of texts, specification of time, place and person, determination of the original cause of a statement, and other aspects of studying it in context.

These devices were a substantial equivalent to what would later be called respectively descriptive and analytical bibliography, and internal criticism. The bibliographical style was directly in line with the long respected practices of Servius and Boëthius, and was being recommended afresh at that very time, for teaching literature, by an influential German Benedictine. How many others utilized it who never bothered to record the fact? Clearly, the broadened and perhaps refined application of a more or less standard bibliographical style, stimulated by new conditions, was strengthening the foundations for the bibliographical apparatus of the future. Not much longer would library catalogs suffice which listed only authors and titles, often rendered them incompletely, and usually included only those of the first item in each of the many codexes containing several. Indeed a new apparatus would soon be demanded by a world in possession of more copies, more editions, more titles—then printed books with title pages—then still more copies, editions, and titles.

Internal criticism, owing a good deal to the precepts fashioned out of the classical tradition by the Roman poet Horace, was advanced partly through the influence of his critical admirer of the twelfth century, the philosopher and political theorist John of Salisbury:

The considerations prompting the speaker [he wrote in 1159 in his polemical text, *Metalogicon*, Book I, ch. 19] may be surmised from the occasion, the kind of person he is, and the sort of listeners he has, as well as from the place, the time, and various other pertinent circumstances that must be taken into account by one who seriously seeks the truth.

The serious search for truth was by then notable for a widening span of variation in what "rhetoric," "dialectic," and "logic" meant in

different mouths, and how those subjects were thought to be related to one another. Theology and philosophy were separating as subjects; the juxtaposition of "faith" and "reason" was becoming familiar. The debate reached a climax in the second half of the twelfth century, when translation gave the Latin world for the first time the more complex portions of Aristotle's *Organon*. This "New Logic" would probably have had a sharp impact in any case. Certainly the ground had been well prepared for it by dialectician Peter Abelard and his assembling (about 1100) of contradictory opinions of the Fathers under the title *Yes and No*—without the customary exegesis designed to reconcile the contradictions. Provocative, and thereby offensive to many desirous of seeing the dust settle, Abelard helped create an audience eager for systematizers of source material whose tone was conciliatory. In the *Decretum* of 1140, the Bolognese monk Gratian thus treated canon law. His fellow countryman Peter Lombard, who arrived in Paris with a copy of Gratian and the sponsorship of the influential reformer-monk, Bernard of Clairvaux, produced in his *Sentences* (1150) a kindred approach to theology, at once questioning and faithful, controlled and relaxed. These two texts became standard almost immediately, Gratian's coming to be held soon in a great many libraries, Lombard's in nearly every one for which records survive—often in multiple copies; the next century or two was soaked in commentaries on Lombard's effort and several "sentences" from other hands.

If medicine, law and theology in their respective ways generated special forces which affected civilization at large, those forces were entering an arena where a major act was already in progress. The monasteries had long followed predominantly the obedience-chastity-poverty formula of St. Benedict, but as organized economic units in a world of feudal manors they came in many instances to wax rich as corporate bodies. The French abbey of St. Riquier, whose library catalog of 831 is one of the more enlightening of those extant, was not one of the larger establishments of the Carolingian Renaissance. Yet it was lord to 117 vassals, and from the 2500 houses in the town which grew up around it the abbey was entitled to collect annually 10,000 chickens, 400 pounds of wax, other rent in kind, and money rent. Monks in Benedictine foundations seldom engaged any longer in physical labor; others were available for that.

Circumstances of this sort subverted official poverty—sometimes moral fiber in general, and emphasis on material concerns mounted also as lay landowners interpenetrated with the upper church officialdom. Several efforts at reform were undertaken, the Cistercians, launched in 1098, being notable for establishing houses in remote, inauspicious localities where the achievement of creature comforts was almost sure to

take a long time. Yet, within little more than a century, even those famous tamers of swamps had corporatively grown fat and somewhat soft. Monasticism now faced many enemies, and the acceleration of urbanism both reduced its serf-labor supply and increased its commercial competition from the *bourgeoisie*.

In the expanding towns were often cathedrals with various types of personnel performing a wide range of functions. They were quite likely to include a "chapter" of "canons" who might or might not live by a "rule" and who usually did not take a vow of poverty. To the schools they conducted came not only candidates for the priesthood but many with other objectives, who qualified technically by joining a "minor order." By the year 1000 the cathedral schools were more important in education than the monasteries: more and more isolated from the stream of life, the latter would henceforth decline.

Two writers of the 1120's illustrate well the differences in environment and outlook. Bernard of Clairvaux, one of the last great figures in the tradition of monastic isolation and contemplation, denounced "curiosity" as the "beginning of all sin" (*The Steps of Humility*, 38); and insisted that the liberal arts were not required for salvation and therefore were only an optional subject for the monks' study. He did concede that, so far as ordinary instruction was concerned, they held an honorable and useful place. Hugh of the famous Parisian abbey of St. Victor, was likewise an humble man of Faith: he cautioned in the Preface to his *Didascalicon* "lest mere study" interfere with "good works." Yet he was also an urban schoolmaster. He not only spoke of the liberal arts as the "foundation of all learning" (*Didascalicon*, Book Three, Ch. 4), but even cited enthusiastically the earnest struggles for knowledge of noted pagans of antiquity (same, Ch. 14). Distinctions like this highlight the danger of bracketing the Bernards and the Hughs, without qualification, as "mystics"; indeed examination of the sources often undermines widely circulated generalizations.

Both the enlargement of the scale of urban cathedral and abbey school instruction and publication, and the last major bursts of scholarly activity in certain monasteries, helped produce sophisticated analyses of the reading matter in the libraries. Now being examined on a large scale were the early attempts at reconciling the differences among the western Fathers, the news from the broadening company of Greek-readers that even sharper differences awaited the investigator, the insights into Hebrew originals afforded by the Jewish scholars consulted by Abelard and many other Christians, the example of law scholarship moving towards order and reasoned thinking, the emergence *via* translation from the Arabic of mathematics—the very model of systematized

abstraction, and the problems of the suitability for teaching of pagan works and contemporary vernacular reading matter.

Amid the welter of conflicting ideas of what was both reliable and pertinent, those concerned with education struggled for clarity and security. The idea of the "authorized" was not new: it had been known to Periclean Athens, the pupils of Aristotle, the Alexandrian scholars and dilettantes. The "canonical," moreover, ranging from simply "authentic" to "exclusively acceptable," had long been used to identify officially Christian writings of recognized authority. The concept now gave rise to the very name "canon law," by definition distinct from the Roman civil law of several well-known codes and the contemporary *Corpus Juris Civilis*. In the sphere of religious and secular literature, the idea of the "canonical" presumably further enhanced the standing of the "doctors" of the Church (Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, and Pope Gregory), and the leading *auctores* Christian and pagan such as Virgil. Certain works appear repeatedly in the library catalogs still extant, others appear seldom. Although not called a "canon," these lists of preferred books constituted, in effect, a standard catalog for book selection.

In terms of intellectual history, whether or not reflected in library holdings, there were really two such standard catalogs. One school of thought was even then marking off the seven liberal arts textbooks, or *artes*, under the traditionally very broad label "philosophy" as what really mattered—beyond the sacred writings, while denoting as hardly more than excess baggage the poetic-literary balance. In the early twelfth century, Hugh of St. Victor, expressing this very view, could also declare (*Didascalicon*, Book Three, Ch. 13) that "the wise student . . . gladly hears all, reads all, and looks down upon no writing, no person, no teaching," in order to meditate on his own ignorance. A century later this brand of thought would have flowered as a part of Scholasticism, exerting a somewhat restrictive effect upon European library life in general. Significant also were such particular consequences as its combining with the national and class interests of the Norman conquerors of England: poetry in Anglo-Saxon, the language of the suppressed indigenous peasantry, was kept out of the libraries. On the other hand were equally articulate figures who thought the *auctores* (poets) and *philosophi* (prose-writers) of belles-lettres still authoritative; they began by respecting the *artes* as well, but would shortly be forced to fight them and Scholastic "philosophy" in defense of humanist ideas.

The new confrontation was nourished also by the circumstances in which literature was being produced, especially in France. Material comforts at courts provided subjects of interest to poets and their patrons. The frustrations of educated poor men of wit, who outnumbered

the positions open to graduates of church schooling, sparked satire and other humor. For all this the Roman models were highly relevant, and employed. Pagan works, especially those amenable to allegorical interpretation, turn up in the library catalogs of the eleventh and twelfth centuries with markedly increased frequency. Although Ovid's *Art of Love* had long been rejected by most churchmen for its pagan sensuality, it was now widely read—even by nuns—as a series of allegorical religious lessons on familiar themes like the Church as Christ's Bride. As may be seen in the source materials assembled by Theodor Gottlieb (*Ueber mittelalterliche Bibliotheken*; Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1890; Graz reprint, 1955; no. 183, p. 72), Ovid's is one of the few names on an Austrian abbey's loan list of the twelfth century, one of the oldest known. Also, Ovid held a place in the front rank in the anthologies—the *florilegia*. Extant copies of Capella's *Marriage of Mercury and Philology* (ca. 430) prepared in the twelfth century and for some time afterward are usually incomplete, because readers sought only the allegorical Books I and II; the seven liberal arts balance was *passé*, except for Book VII on "astronomy" (heavily astrological), often issued as a separate item.

The twelfth century in particular saw also a striking wave of condensed versions of the writings of antiquity. This was in the first place a conscious tribute to brevity as a classical criterion of good style. It may also have been somewhat indebted to the burgeoning of a society in which time, like all else, can be measured in money.

## II

The growth of a commodity economy—production primarily for exchange rather than personal consumption—was in evidence in several phenomena of twelfth-century library life, and not all were entirely new even then. As early as 692 a church council had tried to illegalize cutting up, corrupting, or selling to book or "perfume" buyers, a book of the Holy Scriptures or a patristic contribution. Disposing of these ideologically precious writings on the open market was declared permissible only if they had already been ruined by bookworms, water, or something else. How successful this effort proved does not appear in surviving records.

Already on the scene also, here and there, was direct support to library services. A monastery might endow its library with a portion of the expected annual revenue; or in the manner of the abbot of Fleury, establish (1146) a library tax upon the officers of his abbey and the dependent priories. A church might grant part of the tithes to its *scriptorium*. A center like the famous Abbey of St. Victor, founded in

Paris in 1110, might develop an exceptional library with the aid of gifts from the royal family. Not yet, however, was cash the main basis of library operations. Monastery and church *scriptoria* were still very busy, especially in the areas which had been ravaged in the ninth and tenth centuries by Normans, Saracens, or Magyars, and needed replacements for their ruined book collections. Books were acquired by such means as the late eleventh-century practice at the Abbey of Corvey: each novice about to graduate to the next stage in his career was expected to present the library with a codex. Standards of copying, having suffered noticeable depression since Carolingian days, were given new attention by men like Lanfranc, distinguished churchman and associate of William the Conqueror.

Although many religious houses attracted clusters of population around them, few villagers were literate or able to deposit the customary pledge to borrow a book. Loans to outsiders—laymen of standing or other libraries—were probably rather limited. In the large monastic houses, nevertheless, there arose by the twelfth century enough additional borrowing, by the brothers themselves, to encourage the formation of two separate collections, one of the books loanable to the monks and to laymen, the other of books basic to the daily routine and often kept under lock and key. This precedent was probably beneficial to the latterly prominent cathedral libraries, still more to the newly important urban diocesan “chapter” and abbey libraries heavily patronized by students.

As students crowded into major towns, their needs stimulated the expansion of appropriate commercial enterprise. Manufacturing the books they needed, for cash sale, became in the twelfth century an industry supporting an unknown number of scribes and binders. New titles became available quickly in places distant from the *scriptorium* of original issue; in Paris, at least, books could be bought on the street. Students lacking the funds to buy the necessary texts either copied out what they needed or borrowed from their teachers. Indeed some copied for hire. By the end of the century there must have been great pressure on libraries in university towns to change their ways and loan books to impecunious students. For in 1212 a Paris council recommended cancellation of the curses traditionally laid upon persons removing books from a church or monastery library. A loan to the poor was a major act of mercy, it was pointed out, and should cover precisely this helping hand to the needy student. Indeed, refusing to loan books under these circumstances was to be forbidden.

Books were familiar objects not merely to those who read them in line of duty, or enjoyed the multifarious passages in contemporary literature comparing books or writing to the blood of martyrs, the human



face, or the heart. The idea of the book was also projected in this metaphorical style in sermons: the preacher might even dramatize his spiritual point by explaining step by step how a book was made. What this mass education contributed to the awakening of interest in and demand for reading matter among largely illiterate peasants and ordinary townsmen is not yet known; the subject has apparently not been explored.

In any case, the book requirements of formal study were substantial. And the increase in the number and use of books obliged the newer libraries as well as those of the monasteries, in many instances, to divide the collection. It was not unusual in the twelfth century for a religious house to maintain one group of books for the adult residents, concentrated upon theology and liturgy; another for the lay students who came to school there, comprising largely texts in the liberal arts and supplementary classical writings. In some cloisters the area assigned to works of divinity was now a full scale "book room." Fairly familiar also was the division between heavily-used items and the balance. The former had lately—precisely when is uncertain—been taken out of the locked closets, for easier access, and in the common interest chained to the desks they were laid upon. Functional convenience was likewise behind the separate location of two self-contained portions of the collection. Books immediately related to the conduct of the services were often placed near the altar, a prototype for the standard sub-entry in modern catalogs, ". . . Liturgy and ritual." Books used in the singing were frequently stored "in the choir."

The type and number of divisions in any single establishment varied with circumstances. Very few instances have been verified, apparently, where there were more than three. Catalogs from those years listing theological and service items alone, or school items alone, are no proof that the other materials were not at hand.

Most codexes, it seems, were assigned fixed locations; an identifying Roman numeral was sometimes posted in the catalog next to the codex entry. Roman letters began to be called on, too, probably later. Actually, these developments cannot be dated closely: their emergence may have been as early as the eleventh century, and was almost surely no later than the twelfth. In a few striking cases like that of the Canterbury library cataloged in 1170, location symbols are known to have been marked in the books. More often, perhaps, codexes bore the device of the *scriptorium* of origin. But it remains largely undetermined whether "call numbers" appeared in the book as well as the catalog, whether they were on the outside or inside of the codex or both, whether they indicated an entire shelf or other group-space or a particular space as-

signed to a particular work. The uncertainties are aggravated by varying use of the Latin terms for shelf, desk, location, etc.

Furthermore, location symbols are seldom on view in the surviving catalogs of that age. Most of them were bare inventories, in many instances inscribed on blank pages of one of the books, mute testimony to service primarily to the protection of corporate property rather than the reader's convenience. Indeed "*inventorium*" was often the initial word in the title, and such documents frequently listed also other possessions like vestments and candlesticks. Even more expressive of property-consciousness, and perhaps responsive to the reawakening spirit of commerce, was the increasing utilization of "treasury" ("*thesaurus*") instead of "inventory." At any rate, both these terms bespeak departure from the neutral flavor of "*brevis*," their predecessor of a few hundred years standing but in the twelfth century seen much less often.

Codexes were still being listed as a rule in order of the official importance of the subjects and authors of the first works within them. It would be fascinating to learn what we probably never will learn, how often a given work known from some catalog listings was actually in other collections too, but not listed because it was not the first item in the codex containing it. Why was it sometimes first and sometimes an "after-item" unlisted? Was there any work in the libraries of that age which was widely read although seldom listed in the catalogs? The study of what was listed has not been pursued to exhaustiveness; the story of the others may yet be pieced together in part.

Whatever the reader expected, whatever a teacher or someone else had told him, repeated handling of catalogs would in time accustom at least the more alert users of the library to the predominant patterns of arrangement. The Holy Scriptures—generally referred to as "*bibliotheca*"—usually enjoyed the place of honor. Church writers customarily came next, first the Fathers, then more recent authorities. Augustine was evidently considered the most important, not merely one of the four "doctors" of the church but the leading doctor, for his works were recorded before those of the others, despite his being third chronologically and second alphabetically (after Ambrose). That his name began with an "A" apparently meant nothing in itself. Secular writings were ordinarily listed after the sacred.

Certain types of material often appeared as a group entry. Continental library catalogues of the ninth to twelfth centuries speak of codexes in the "Scottish script"—that is, the hand long used by Irish copyists—which few Europeans, if any, could read. Some English catalogs of the twelfth century notice as such, works in Anglo-Saxon. Almost any catalog was likely to refer to medical books as a group, and it was

not unusual to list thus grammars or other "arts" titles. But however the contents of the library might be grouped in these inventories, labeled divisions like those in the eleventh-century catalog of the French cathedral library of LePuy—(No. 378 in Gottlieb, p. 137)—

Poets and grammarians	Music
Dialectic	Astronomy
Rhetoric	" <i>Scedule</i> " (Church calendar?)
Theology	

were apparently still rare at the close of the twelfth.

The same applies to descriptive cataloging as thought of in later times. Normally, a twelfth-century entry provided a title; the author was given too, if known. The number of physical volumes was occasionally reported, but neither pagination nor date of "publication" had yet won that much attention. The *scriptorium* of origin might be indicated in the book's "signature" but not in the catalog.

Likewise not repeated in the catalog was the curse normally written at the end of a manuscript—until the thirteenth century, at least, and perhaps longer—to protect the book from overzealous borrowing or outright theft. Loan regulations often forbade a brother to read heavily-used books anywhere but in the library area, and when a book could be carried off to his cell he usually signed for it with a pledge of some sort. The introduction of the carrel ("*Karola*," "*carola*"—inspiration Charlemagne?), for those writing as well as reading, has been attributed to the lack of a *scriptorium* at certain houses. A borrower was limited, as a rule, to one or two codexes at a time. Important and expensive works could be loaned only by permission of the abbot. Physical care included prompt shelving in proper order and not too tightly; the closets now tended to have vertical partitions between shelves. At the Abbey of St. Victor in Paris, in what may represent many libraries' practice in that age, regulations stipulated that the book closets be protected from moisture with wooden linings, and that the librarian inspect each book two or three times a year to repair damage done by moisture or vermin.

The librarian—"custos librorum" or "*armarius*"—was responsible to the abbot for all books. He controlled most of the use of the library, and told the *scriptorium* staff what to copy. His permission was required for erasures or changes. He was normally a monk or priest himself, and, at least in large urban establishments as well as at several famous monasteries, is likely to have been an educated man—William of Malmesbury, for example, monk-librarian-historian. Under some circumstances—monastic, usually—he was also the official in charge of the music books and the singing, "*precentor*" as well as *armarius*. Of at least one set of regulations, those of the recently organized Premonstratensians, it is said

that the librarian's duties were spelled out with exceptional clarity and that his status was distinctively independent. That may account for their stipulating that the librarian handle the borrowing of books from outside sources—an assignment reportedly unique in the extant records, although the borrowing itself was a well-established practice. Still, there is nothing to suggest that anyone was specifically guided and trained to be a librarian.

### III

Certain lineaments of the future, however, respecting both the practices and the training of librarians, were observable in a work produced for other purposes. The spectrum of educational effort in the twelfth century included many specialties like mathematics, law, poetry, and dialectics. It also harbored naturalistic rationalism, testifying among other things to the impact of revived commercial life. Both specialization and naturalistic rationalism distressed many minds of the time. One of them, educator Hugh of St. Victor, was also bothered by what seemed to him undisciplined dabbling and a sadly lacking sense of values.

He therefore undertook to prepare a corrective for the numerous students at the young but already celebrated Parisian Abbey of St. Victor. His text supported the Augustinian focus on balanced study, primarily of the seven liberal arts, in pursuit of the wisdom linking the student to God. This *Didascalicon* (late 1120's) was a success in at least two respects. It was often drawn upon and discussed by contemporaries and later writers. And the demand for it was sufficient to accord it wide distribution: some forty-five libraries all over Europe still possess copies dating from the days before printing.

Hugh's commitment to faith logically gave top status to Theology in the Philonic-Augustinian meaning of Biblical Revelation. In order of presentation he appears to run counter to Augustine's injunction and Cassiodorus' example, since this Theology follows (Books Four to Six) rather than precedes Philosophy (Books One to Three). But he has simply chosen to build from the ground to the heights: the sacred writings alone, avows the noted Victorine, are free from error (Book Four, *passim*). He also explains (Book Five, Ch. 6) that "although it is clearly more important for us to be just than to be wise," he knows that "many" nevertheless seek in Scriptural studies "knowledge rather than virtue." Since he believes that "neither of these should be disapproved of, but that both are necessary and praiseworthy," he proposes to discuss both. Indeed, where Augustine had shrugged off good writing as unimportant in itself, Hugh urges readers of the Holy Scriptures (Book Five,

Ch. 7) to be stirred "not only" by their literary appeal but by the beauty of their Truth.

As for the mundane studies, said the author (Book Two, Ch. 29), he was offering only "the divisions and the names of things." This first half of his treatise was, in fact, a series of very brief introductions, none original. But the very focus on the organization of knowledge, and the systematic presentation, produced a more detailed but still coherent picture of the classification of knowledge than appears in any earlier surviving work.

In Book Three, Chapter 1, Hugh offered a retrospective synopsis of his scheme. In Appendix A he repeated that synopsis with brief explanations of his terms. Additional details on several topics can be found very easily in the discussion proper which occupies most of Book Two. Here is a composite rendering carried as far as Hugh carried it except where ellipsis is indicated:

### *Theoretical Arts*

Theology (invisibles)

Natural Science (invisible causes of visibles)

Mathematics (visible forms of visibles)

Arithmetic (discrete quantities) . . .

Music (discrete quantities in relation to each other—proportion) . . .

Geometry (immobile continuous—space) . . .

Astronomy (mobile continuous—motion) . . .

### *Practical*

Solitary (personal ethics)

Private (family and household)

Public (political science)

### *Mechanical*

Fabric-making

Armament

Construction . . .

Crafts . . .

Commerce

Agriculture

Arable

Wooded & vine

Pastoral

Floral

- Hunting
  - Gaming
  - Fowling
  - Fishing
  - Food preparation . . .
- Medicine
  - "Occasions" (Health factors) . . .
  - "Operations" (Medical practice) . . .
- Theatrics
  - Theater: epics
  - Porches: choral processions and dances
  - Gymnasia: wrestling
  - Amphitheatres: racing
  - Arenas: boxing
  - Banquets: songs and instruments; dice
  - Temples: sacred singing

### Logic

- Grammar
- Theory of argument
  - Demonstrative
  - Probable
    - Dialectic
    - Rhetoric
  - Sophistic

This pattern, of course, owes a great deal to earlier thinkers, all the way back to the Pre-Socratic philosophers, although the formulations—and confusion—are largely derived from the earlier medieval intermediary writers already mentioned. Hugh's classification looks very much like Aristotle's, as Hugh knew it mainly from the translations and commentaries of Boëthius. The kinship is rather close in the areas of the "Practical" and the "Mechanical." Rhetoric, one subdivision of Aristotle's "Practical" (by way of Politics), appears in Hugh as a subdivision rather of Logic. Military Science, paired with Rhetoric as a division of Politics in Aristotle, does not seem to be treated in the *Didascalicon* at all.

The relationship is rather distant in the "Theoretical." Hugh could not have learned much natural science from his guides. In any case, Aristotle discussed at length, in several works, what are now called Physics and Astronomy, Zoology, Human Physiology and Psychology; the twelfth century schoolmaster assigned these subjects largely, in a capsule statement (Book Two, Ch. 12), to two divisions of Music: "What belongs to the universe" and "what belongs to man." Between that

and what he placed in certain subdivisions of the Mechanical, hardly anything was left for Natural Science (or "Physics," as it was regularly called, down to the eighteenth century). Indeed, Hugh had little to say under that heading (Book Two, Chs. 16 and 17).

Theology in what had long been its lesser sense Hugh presented briefly (Book Two, Ch. 2), first in the words of Boëthius about God and the soul, then in the language repeated by Isidor of Seville from Cassiodorus, on God and "spiritual creatures." Such discourse had, in the buffeting of centuries, departed some distance from its character in the writings of Aristotle.

Logic in Hugh's hands also displays a surface resemblance to the Aristotelian, but little more. Although the terms are all duly reported (Book Two, Ch. 30), the reader would certainly have acquired not even a glimmering of what had been meant by either "demonstration" (certainty, from axioms) or "dialectic" (reasoning about opinions). Furthermore, Hugh tailored Rhetoric to the Christian pattern of "what is suitable," where Aristotle had spoken only of persuasion as a process in itself, independent of morals, a division of Politics.

Hugh indicated that Grammar might cover portions of literature, as it had in the better days of schooling. He emphasized, however, that verse and fiction, ordinary history and fables, were only side-issues, not really parts of the serious reading matter he called "Philosophy" (Book Three, Ch. 4). Yet, to understand the Bible allegorically, one surely needed "history"—which to him was a technique of reading as well as the reciting of "deeds." (Book Six, Ch. 3).

The fine arts and architecture do not appear as such in Hugh's classification. Construction, divided into Walls and a miscellany of other subdivisions, perhaps embraced important elements of both. Again, human behavior is touched on at various points like Book Three, Ch. 11, "Concerning Memory." But, in the manner familiar from the writings of Augustine and other church authorities, there is nothing so substantial and directly focussed on psychology as Aristotle's *On the Soul*.

Not mentioned in the body of the work, but dealt with in Appendix B, is Magic, eleven divisions of it—and all, he wrote, outside Philosophy.

Hugh did not refer to Law (apart from the Holy Scriptures), although he did write of the companion special fields of Medicine and Theology. This may derive in part from the fact that what he knew of Aristotle did not touch on matters legal.

Regardless of the differences between Aristotle and Hugh of St. Victor, the latter's pattern of classification acquired a significance of its own as his book was read and discussed. Not least of the reasons is the fact that his classification table was sufficiently detailed—more than preceding schemes—to pose the problem familiar to all students of the

subject: what does one do with a sub-topic which "belongs to" several different larger topics simultaneously? Hugh's reply (Book Two, Ch. 26) was as follows:

Let no one be disturbed that among the means employed by medicine I count food and drink, which earlier I attributed to hunting. For these belong to both under different aspects. For instance, wine in the grape is the business of agriculture; in the barrel, of the cellarer, and in its consumption, of the doctor. Similarly, the preparing of food belongs to the mill, the slaughter-house, and the kitchen, but the strength given by its consumption, to medicine.

That the "different aspects" of subjects created problems for classifiers of books, that modes of announcing resources in various subjects would have to be devised to allow full representation in library catalogs for each "aspect," may or may not have been in Hugh's mind. As an educated man, he was probably aware of the fact that many codexes included more than one work, and that the combination was not necessarily homogeneous subjectwise; whether or not he thought of such phenomena as a problem, is so far unrevealed.

Obviously conscious of the inter-relations among the myriad subdivisions of knowledge, Hugh chose to present the matter along Aristotelian lines. He could have chosen otherwise. The "Physics-Ethics-Logic" pattern associated with Plato had actually been adopted by most known writers on the subject for the fifteen hundred years in between. Why did Hugh reject the preference of the Stoics, Augustine, Cassiodorus, and Isidor; and follow Boëthius?

There is no certain answer. The probability is, however, that he was acting consistently with his convictions about belles-lettres and specialization. Both were prominent among the concerns of his contemporaries, especially at the great school of Chartres (about 40 miles west-southwest of Paris); and a powerful influence upon those thinkers was what they knew of Plato—mainly fragmentary or second-hand. Furthermore, many of the specialists were naturalistically or rationalistically inclined, and Hugh's allegiance was in the Augustinian camp of faith and humility. Did he choose "Aristotle's" classification rather than "Plato's" as a move against what he disapproved in philosophy and pedagogy? However that may be, the choice gave him coverage of the Mechanical, which he said he could not find in the Platonic scheme; and he bracketed the Mechanical with Ethics as important because of their respective "concern for works and morals." (Book Two, Ch. 16). Also, whereas the Platonic tradition gave Dialectic a tremendous, central role, and treated Rhetoric on the whole as less than fully respectable, an Aristotelian plan could



be hospitable to both, modestly; the latter was by far the more appropriate to Hugh's objective and tactics.

\* \* \*

The ideas on classification projected by Hugh of St. Victor were not of course the only ones of that era. Many attempts at interpreting the human condition, not to speak of the cosmos, implied a particular style of organizing knowledge. Still, Hugh had the advantage of "feedback" from students; whether that helped pave the way or not, his was popular. Its influence was to be obvious in the great encyclopedia of the next, the thirteenth century, the *Great Mirror* of Vincent of Beauvais. Together with those of Isidore of Seville and the other compilers Vincent drew upon, liberally and usually explicitly, the Victorine teacher's lessons would reverberate through minds at school for many generations to come. And it seems likely that those serving as librarians were, like the rest, shaped accordingly.

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